
INTRODUCTION

It is prudent to look towards energy security as a means to maintain economic strength and support the capability of Armenia to prosper. One of the avenues being explored at this point in time is the potential to use domestic coal reserves to provide a dependable source of domestic fuel. One of the primary uses of this fuel would be the generation of electric power. Therefore, the capability to supply domestic coal to a coal-fired power station in Armenia is being evaluated to achieve this energy security goal.

Coal has long been known to exist in Armenia, but coal resources paled in contrast to the resources of the Former Soviet Union (FSU) such that in an era of central planning, little attention was paid to the comparatively meager coal resources in Armenia. Coal deposits identified by past exploration efforts were thought to be small and to have relatively thin and discontinuous coal seams. Subsequently, the potential for huge economic coal resources appeared quite remote.

Recently, the United States Geological Survey (U.S.G.S.) under a Participating Agency Service Agreement with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has been working with the Armenian Government on the Armenian Coal Exploration and Resource Assessment Program. This program, conducted from 1995 through 1999, consisted of geologic field work and mapping, exploration drilling, coal quality laboratory activities, geophysical logging activities, map production, database creation, resource assessment, and comprehensive training on all aspects of the program. The work concluded, to date, with several results including determination of increased coal resources, identification of new coal resources, and other achievements.

At this point in time, it is necessary to review the work completed to date, and assess the potential coal appears to provide for generating a higher degree of energy independence.